1.0 APPLICATION

In January 2005, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a new hydroelectric license for the existing Oroville Facilities (FERC Project No. 2100). This Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA) is an integral part of the license application. The Oroville Facilities were developed as part of the California State Water Project (SWP), a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants, and pumping plants. The Oroville Facilities currently operate under a license issued by FERC on February 11, 1957, which expires on January 31, 2007.

The hydroelectric generation facilities include three power plants with a combined licensed capacity of 762 megawatts (MW). The Hyatt Pumping-Generating Plant is the largest of three power plants with a licensed generating capacity of 645 MW. Other generation facilities include the 3 MW Thermalito Diversion Dam Powerplant and the 114 MW Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant. The historical average annual generation for the Oroville Facilities is 2,382,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) and the historical average annual energy requirements for pump-back operations are 162,400 MWh.

The Oroville Facilities are located on the Feather River in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in Butte County, California. They are near the City of Oroville and are approximately 70 miles north of the City of Sacramento (see Figure 5.1-2). Project lands occupy 41,100 acres. There are 6,175 acres of federal land located within the FERC project boundary, as summarized in Table 5.8-1 and shown in Figures 5.8-1a through 5.8-2c. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have primary management responsibility for these federal lands.

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